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DECISION.

ALL wisdom is a system of balances. It is allowed that caution and deliberation are good things; but in many circumstances these are false friends, and it is found afterwards that a less considerate policy would have been best. Again, however, it would be very wrong to counsel a bold policy as invariably preferable to a cautious one: it would often be found dangerous. There is, in short, no maxim which is a specific: conditions modify the eligibility of every one of them.

With regard to decision in conduct, the first great point is to know what to decide upon, and the second to know if the plan adopted should be unflinchingly carried out. Many men are remarkably decisive without being wise, or finding their choice a fortunate one. Many hold firmly enough to their plan, when wisdom would rather recommend its being abandoned. Decisiveness of conduct is, in such cases, manifestly no advantage. But when a quick and far-seeing sagacity has once chosen a right course, it is well to adopt it unhesitatingly, cordially, fully, and to go through with it with boldness and energy. Then is decision in conduct found to be a valuable quality—but then only. There is no point in which more mistakes are made. A vast number of men think they are acting with decision, when they are simply rash and headstrong. Many believe they are *thinking* with decision when they are merely uncanonically towards all opposing considerations, wise in their own conceit, and perilously obstinate.

It often happens, nevertheless, that decisive men of this kind can point to their happy instances. Conduct like theirs is now and then attended by good fortune. But such cases are only like the dreams that prove true—strongly remarked, while all the false ones are lost sight of. They no more justify the rashness and obstinacy of the parties, than does a death happening soon after the hearing of the death-watch prove that there is a connexion between the perforations of the insect and human mortality. These instances are the ruin of the unwise decisive men, for they encourage the fatal failing. Perhaps successful in one case, which involved no important results, they are emboldened to try the same plan in a very different one, and are sadly punished. Such blindfold decision is, indeed, only a kind of gambling.

In aiming at decisive thinking on controversial subjects, and at the duty and credit of holding fast by opinions, it is important to guard against similar errors. It is easy, by shutting one's eyes to every thing that can be said on the opposite side, and getting one's self-love interested in the matter, to obtain a very comfortable set of very decided opinions, and thus become a respectable sort of wronghead or bigot. But it is not so easy, out of the contending considerations on all sorts of difficult questions, to select such as may form a reasonably sound set of opinions, in adherence to which there may be genuine usefulness and real honour. On the contrary, many of the soundest heads have been amongst the most hesitating on a certain dubious class of subjects. It is easy to laugh at the difficulties and doubts of a Lord Eldon, and to admire the nimbleness of some other men in the same situation; but it is by no means certain that quick decisions in law, any more than in speculative questions, are the best. Mr Canning describes a man as swearing,

— "with keen discriminating sight,
Black's not so black, nor white so very white."

But, though such a manner of speaking is apt to convey a notion of weakness or hesitation, we should remember that the patient separation of the true

from the false, and the correct adjustment of the respective limits of both, are amongst the highest efforts of the logical intellect. Perhaps there are some things on which to talk decisively is only to make an open declaration of short-sightedness and folly.

We see more clearly the value of decision in conduct than that of decision in forming a set of abstract opinions. It must ever be of vast consequence to be able to decide at once upon what is the best course of procedure in any of the affairs of life. It often happens that the reasons for taking a particular step are made a little obscure and dubious by the presence of some advantage connected with the opposite course, or by a difficulty and disadvantage attending the right one. For example, in the great fire at Hamburg, it became evident that no expedient for stopping the conflagration would be effectual but the forming of a gap in the buildings. Here the great difficulty of the senate was to determine on making a large enough sacrifice of buildings, for the buildings were of course valuable, every body was interested for the saving of his own house, and there was still the hope that the flames might not come so far, in which case the sacrifice would have been made needlessly. On the other hand, the risk from making too small a sacrifice was obvious, for the fire was advancing, and it might come up to the site marked out for a gap before the gap was effectually made, when of course a much larger gap would become necessary. It was a fine case for the exertion of a wise decisiveness of judgment. In this, unfortunately, the senate failed. They could not take a sufficiently liberal view of the required sacrifice. The gap which they made was made in vain; the flames went on, and were only finally stopped by a perhaps ten times greater sacrifice.

One of the finest examples of this wise decisiveness on record occurs in the earlier part of Napoleon's historical life. He had made his wonderful irruption into Northern Italy, and overthrown great bodies of the Austrian troops. Little seemed wanting to complete the conquest of Lombardy but the taking of Mantua, to which he devoted 10,000 of his troops. At this juncture, he heard of the approach of a new Austrian army, consisting of 60,000 men, while he had in all only 40,000. By marching quickly along the banks of the Lake of Garda, they cut off his retreat to Milan, which he felt to endanger his position very materially. But the Austrian army came on both sides of the lake, 20,000 on the one and 40,000 on the other. Napoleon determined to take a position at the end of the lake, so as to be between the two parties when they came to join. To pursue the narrative of M. Thiers—"By rapidly forming a main mass, the French might overpower the 20,000 who had turned the lake, and immediately afterwards return to the 40,000 who had defiled between the lake and the Adige. But, to occupy the extremity of the lake, it was necessary to call in all the troops from the Lower Adige and the Lower Mincio; Augereau must be withdrawn from Legnago and Serrurier from Mantua, for so extensive a line was no longer tenable. This involved a great sacrifice, for Mantua had been besieged during two months, a considerable battering train had been transported before it, the fortress was on the point of capitulating, and, by allowing it to be revictualled, the fruit of these vigorous efforts, an almost assured prey, escaped his grasp. Bonaparte, however, did not hesitate; between two important objects, he had the sagacity to seize the most important and sacrifice to it the other—a simple resolution in itself, but one which displays not alone the great captain but the great man. It is not in war merely, it occurs in politics and in all the situations of life, that men en-

counter two objects, and, aiming to compass both, fail in each. Bonaparte possessed that rare and decisive vigour which prompts at once the choice and the sacrifice. Had he persisted in guarding the whole course of the Mincio, from the extremity of the Lake of Garda to Mantua, he would have been pierced; by concentrating on Mantua to cover it, he would have had 70,000 men to cope with at the same time—60,000 in front and 10,000 in the rear. He sacrificed Mantua, and concentrated at the point of the Lake of Garda." The consequences were an admirable reward of the genius shown on the occasion. He first met the corps of 20,000 under Quasdanovich, or rather its advanced parties, which he easily drove back. The Austrian general, surprised to find everywhere imposing masses of the French, was awed, and resolved to halt till he should hear of the other corps under his commander Wurmser. Here the Napoleon genius was again shown, for, guessing what was passing in Quasdanovich's mind, he contented himself with having brought him to a pause, and turned to meet the other party. Of this corps a large portion had passed on with Wurmser to Mantua, leaving 25,000 behind under Bayalitsch. This army advanced with wide-spread wings to envelop the French; but Napoleon penetrated its weakened centre; it lost courage, and withdrew. The French pursued, and greatly damaged it. Other actions ensued; and in six days from the commencement of hostilities, the Austrian generals were again in retreat to the Tyrol, having lost 20,000 men and the kingdom of Lombardy.

In private life, this firmness in making judicious sacrifices is often of great importance. It is as necessary to know when to make such sacrifices, and, it may be added, when to undergo great hazards, as it is to know when to embrace favourable opportunities. Many a commercial man has saved the bulk of his fortune by being able to bring his mind, at some nice juncture, to incur a certain loss, or to expose himself to some considerable risk. It requires a certain liberality of nature to act in this way. The race of narrow wits lose all by clinging desperately to some coward maxim which they can only interpret literally. "Never lose certainty for hope," "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," are their favourite adages—and very good adages they are in most circumstances, but not in all, for it sometimes happens that to make a venture is the best course, not merely for making an advance, but for retaining the present position; and it is abundantly clear that, had those maxims always been adhered to, the world must have stood still almost from the beginning. The liberal-minded, on the other hand, can give a wide enough interpretation to such apothegms, and, if possessed of wisdom, know exactly in any particular case whether they should be rigidly observed or not. To attain to this liberality of mind and this power of judging, and be able to act vigorously and perseveringly in the course adopted, are the grand requisites in this branch of the philosophy of life.

A hesitating, indecisive, and over-cautious manner serves as ill in the most simple and familiar affairs as in the highest; and its consequences are in proportion as bad. To have two things which we wish to do nearly about the same time, and to try to embrace them both in the same morning's labours, or accomplish them by the same walk, usually leads to their not being either of them done well, or in time. The whole pleasure of a day devoted to that object is often lost by a want of decision as to the mode of procedure, or the things to be attempted or done, while all would have been well if a right and rational plan had been started with and rigidly adhered to.

In short, and in fine, decision is a most important quality in all affairs, and particularly in affairs of difficulty; but rashness is not decision; uncautiousness is not decision; headlong, blundering stupidity is not decision—no, it is only to be exemplified by those who, with expanded and sagacious minds to appreciate circumstances and judge of what is best to be done, possess the firmness to go straight forward with an enlightened resolution.

LIVES OF THE ANGLO-SAXON WRITERS.

THE commencement of a splendid design by the Royal Society of Literature—no less than a complete chronological series of British literary biography—presents us with a volume on the Anglo-Saxon writers, by Mr Thomas Wright,* one of those youthful students of antiquities who at present form a somewhat conspicuous class of our intellectual labourers. Mr Wright has executed his task with a degree of diligence, judgment, and good taste, entirely worthy of the whole design to which he is a contributor. His volume will convey to unlearned readers a surprising notion of the extent to which literature flourished amongst the children of the Heptarchy. They will not be prepared to hear that "in England, during the eighth century, the multiplication of books was very great," that religious, political, and narrative poetry were then written both in Latin and in the native tongue, and that even ladies kept up correspondence in the former language with the principal learned men of the time. Yet the fame of some of the writers of that period may be said to be still very generally diffused. Few have not heard of Bede, of Alfred, and of Dunstan. With hardly any exception but that of Alfred, the literary men of England in the Anglo-Saxon period were churchmen or monks. They were the teachers as well as pastors of their flocks, and both wrote books and undertook the duty—equivalent to that of the printer amongst us—of multiplying them. It is impossible to read a just account of these men, devoting themselves in their little cells, often at a distance from all society, to the business of cultivating and diffusing letters, without acknowledging that in their time they were a most useful and praiseworthy part of the community.

Bede, perhaps, stands at the head of the Anglo-Saxon writers. He seems to have spent a modest studious life, unchequered by incident of any kind, at the monastery of Wearmouth, where he died in 735. His works, consisting of Scriptural translations and commentaries, religious treatises, biographies, and an ecclesiastical history of the Anglo-Saxons, which is the only one useful in the present age, were *forty-four* in number; and it is related that he dictated to his amanuensis, and completed a book, on the very day of his death. Alfred, who may be said to have been a century and a half at least posterior to Bede, was also a copious writer, notwithstanding the duties and cares of sovereignty. He translated the historical works of Orosius and Bede, and some religious and moral treatises; also *Æsop's Fables* and the *Psalms*; and there is a collection of proverbs attributed to him. Original writing is mingled with some of his translations. He was also zealous to introduce learned men into his country, and to establish seminaries of learning, though the story of his having commenced the University of Oxford is shown by Mr Wright to be liable to strong suspicion. Mr Wright relates a well-known anecdote of Alfred in a somewhat various way:—

"During the first eight years of his reign, Alfred was engaged in constant warfare with the Danes, until, in 878, after numerous battles fought with various success, his fortunes were reduced so low that he was compelled to seek a shelter with a small body of his most faithful companions in the wilds and woods of Somersetshire. His chief abode was in the isle of Athelney, where a remarkable monument of his misfortunes has since been found, in a beautiful enamelled jewel bearing his name, and now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. This spot was the scene of the interesting legend, so often repeated by modern writers, which appears to have been current in the latter part of the tenth century. The king, according to the oldest document in which this legend is noticed, 'then went lurking through hedges and ways, through woods and fields, so that he, through God's guidance, arrived save at Athelney, and begged shelter in the house of a certain swain, and even diligently served him and his evil wife. It happened one day that this swain's wife beated her oven, and the king sat thereby, warming himself by the fire, the family not knowing that he was the king. Then was the evil woman suddenly stirred up, and said to the king in angry mood, 'Turn thou the loaves, that they burn not: for I see daily that thou art a great eater.' He was quickly obedient to the evil woman, because he needs must." It thus appears that the woman only thought that one who assisted so large in eating her household bread should help to prepare it; not that she gave him a box in the ear, as the story commonly goes, for neglecting to turn certain loaves with the firing of which he had been instructed.

Dunstan seems to have been a very extraordinary person. He was born in 925 near Glastonbury Abbey, and studied in the school at that place. When we read the narrative of his life, we can see very easily that he was indebted for his great distinction not to talent alone, but in part to what would now be considered as a constitutional tendency to delirium. He was liable to fall into a peculiar morbid condition, in which he saw wonderful visions, usually of a religious character. Such things would now be pitied and lamented; in the tenth century, they created awe and admiration. While a young man, he went to Canterbury to visit his uncle Athelm, the archbishop, who introduced him at court. His handsome face and figure, and many accomplishments, amongst which was first-rate skill in playing the harp, made him a great favourite with King Athelstan, but gained him the envy of the courtiers, whose machinations drove him from the palace. Placing himself under the care of another uncle, Alfhelm, bishop of Winchester, he there became "passionately enamoured of a maiden of great beauty, of a rank in life equal with his own, and endowed with the accomplishments congenial to his own character, and he sought permission to marry her. But his uncle Alfhelm was opposed to the union; he probably foresaw in some measure the splendid destiny which awaited his nephew, and he urged him to overcome his passion, and to embrace the strict rule of monastic life, then prevalent in France, but which had not yet been introduced into this island. Dunstan avowed his distaste for monachism, and refused to act according to his uncle's admonitions. The struggle of contending feelings which arose out of these circumstances brought on a new and severe attack of his disease; and while languishing under a burning fever, his uncle came to his bedside, recommenced his exhortations to embrace a monastic life, and told him that he was now suffering under the effects of God's displeasure for having preferred an earthly bride to the Church of Christ. The words of the bishop had a deep effect upon his mind, and he appears to have made a vow that if he recovered he would retire from the world.

Dunstan fulfilled his vow in a manner that was no less extraordinary than the circumstances of his previous life. He built for himself, adjacent to the walls of the church of Winchester, a little cell, the larger portion of which was sunk below the level of the earth, and which was so small that he could scarcely raise himself upright in it. In this narrow receptacle Dunstan made his dwelling, and he only left it when required to perform the necessary acts and duties of his life. The period of his time which was not passed in devotional exercises, was here employed in the practice of the arts, and numerous branches of knowledge in which he was proficient. Dunstan was distinguished by his fondness for science and the mechanical arts, and he was probably acquainted with many instruments and modes of proceeding which, though their principle is now well understood, were then believed to be the work of superhuman agency. His biographer has preserved one of the incidents that drew upon Dunstan the charge of magic. It seems that before he left the court of Athelstan, he had invented a harp which played spontaneously. A noble lady, named Ethelwynn, who was acquainted with his skill in drawing and design, begged his assistance in ornamenting a handsome stole. Dunstan, as usual, carried with him his harp, which, when he entered the apartment of the ladies, he hung beside the wall; and in the midst of their work they were astonished by strains of excellent music which issued from the instrument. Dunstan had in his cell a forge, at which he manufactured the ornaments of metal that were necessary for the use or ornament of the church, while he rendered similar services to the people who visited him. He was skilful also in writing and painting (or illuminating), and frequently practised these arts in his cell; while at times the sound of the hammer gave place to that of his harp.

It is not surprising if, in this solitary and uncomfortable abode, Dunstan frequently laboured under the monomania, as it has been described, to which he was constitutionally subject. He believed himself continually persecuted by demons. It is pretended that on one occasion, in the night, when Dunstan was employed as usual at his forge, the devil came to his hut in the form of a man, and brought him a piece of iron which he wished to be beaten into a certain form. Dunstan willingly undertook the work, but, led by some circumstances to suspect the trick which was put upon him, he watched an opportunity, and suddenly seizing the fiend by the nose with his red-hot tongs, forced him to resume his own proper shape. The howling of the tempter was audible for miles round the cell, and when the terrified inhabitants came next morning to Dunstan to inquire the cause, it is said that they heard this story from his own lips. It is remarkable how much resemblance there is between some of the incidents of Dunstan's biography and those in the lives of the reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Luther also had his struggles with the evil one, and threw an inkstand at him. Like them, Dunstan had his visions of events yet to come. When obliged, by the persecution of King Edwy, to leave his church of Glastonbury, it rung with unearthly laughter, and the pious abbot, turning again, addressed the invisible demon in the following words:—"Go on, for thou shalt soon have more cause to lament for my return than to rejoice now at my

departure." This prediction is perfectly identical with that of John Knox in the French galleys. There is a cheap and easy kind of prophecy by which Dunstan acquired no small part of his fame, consisting in a foretelling of events known to be extremely likely or even threatened. When officiating at the coronation of the murdered Ethelred, he foretold that the sword should not cease its visitations on his house till the throne should have passed to a nation of strangers. In the third year thereafter arrived the first flight of the Danish invaders, who in quick time subdued the kingdom. Can we doubt that the invasion was at this very time threatened, and that Dunstan foresaw the likelihood of its success in the distracted and weak state of the existing government?

This pious man was supposed to do many wonderful things by the black art, when, probably, the only witchcraft which he used was a mechanical skill above his age. At one time the prejudices against him rose so high on this account, that some of his neighbours seized him one day and threw him into a pond, probably to judge of his wizardship by his sinking or swimming. Mr Wright adds:—"What was in part the nature of Dunstan's studies while at Glastonbury, we may surmise from the story of a learned and ingenious monk of Malmesbury, named Ailmer, who, not many years afterwards, made wings to fly, an extraordinary advance in the march of mechanical invention, if we reflect that little more than a century before Ailmer the historian thought the invention of *lanterns* a thing sufficiently wonderful to confer an honour upon his patron, king Alfred. But Ailmer, in the present instance, allowed his zeal to get the better of his judgment. Instead of cautiously making his first experiment from a low wall, he took flight from the top of the church-steeple, and, after fluttering for a short time helplessly in the air, he fell to the ground and broke his legs. Undismayed by this accident, the crippled monk found comfort and encouragement in the reflection, that his invention would certainly have succeeded had he not forgotten to put a tail behind."

In the school-books used in the Anglo-Saxon period, it is curious to find both the system of question and answer, by which so much is now learned, and also that which has been called the Hamiltonian system, by which a foreign tongue is presumed to be acquired by an interlinear translation. For the sharpening of youth (*ad acuendos juvenes*), they had arithmetical problems, such as are still to be found in some treatises of the present age; as, for instance, "The swallow once invited the snail to dinner: he lived just one league from the spot, and the snail travelled at the rate of only one inch a day: how long would it be before he dined?" Again: "An old man met a child, 'Good day, my son!' says he; 'may you live as long as you have lived, and as much more, and thrice as much as all this, and if God gives you one year in addition to the others, you will be just a century old.' What was the lad's age?" In one of these school-books a ship is defined rather beautifully as "a wandering house, a hostile where you will, a traveller that leaves no footstep, a neighbour of the sand." Enigmas were favourite modes of intellectual exercise in those days, and many collections of them were made. For instance—"What is that from which, if you take the head, it becomes higher? *Answer*—Go to your bed, and there you will find it." Here the joke seems to lie in the ambiguity of the expression; take your head from bed, and it (namely, your head) is of course higher. There was great ignorance, of course, of all the natural sciences, and of none more so than medicine. An ancient manuscript in the British Museum gives a striking picture of the low state of this branch of knowledge. One large section of the book relates to external injuries—as wounds and bites of venomous reptiles. There are also many receipts against poison; all of them significant matters. What appears singular, there are more provisions against diseases of the eye than against any other ailment. "Although this treatise is not a herbal, still the ingredients mentioned are chiefly vegetables, though mixed up sometimes with other substances, such as ale and honey, of which latter commodity the consumption was very great among the Anglo-Saxons, and, less frequently, fat, oil, or wine. The powerful medicinal effects produced by vegetable mixtures, and the facility with which they were obtained, will easily explain the great reputation they enjoyed in an uncultivated age; but the real causes of diseases were little known; the connexion between the complaint and the remedy was seldom or very imperfectly understood; and the success of the latter must have been extremely problematical. The object generally aimed at seems to have been to produce a sudden and strong impression on the system, the effect of which must often have proved fatal."

This treatise, Mr Wright remarks, shows how much superstition was mixed with the practice of medicine. "The ingredients which the physician used frequently owed their virtues to some accidental circumstance with which, in the minds of the people, they were connected; as in the case of one receipt in which those particular herbs only are declared to be efficient 'which grow spontaneously, and are not planted by the hand of man.' Much of their efficiency also depended upon the day on which they were administered, or on which the patient fell ill, and this, again, was regulated by the changes of the moon. The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts contain many lists of the attri-

* *Biographia Britannica Literaria, or Biography of Literary Characters of Great Britain and Ireland, arranged in Chronological Order. Anglo-Saxon Period.* By Thomas Wright, M.A., 8vo., pp. 354. London: J. W. Parker, 1842.

butes of each day of the lunar month, as they were supposed to be good or evil for sickness and the various operations of life. For example, they inform us that 'The first day of the moon is propitious for all kinds of work; he who falls ill on that day will languish long and suffer much; the infant who is then born will live. The second is also a prosperous day, good for buying, selling, embarking on shipboard, beginning a journey, sowing, grafting, arranging a garden, ploughing land; theft committed on this day will be soon and easily detected; a person who falls sick will soon recover; the child born will grow fast, but will not live long;' and so on, with many similar delusions. A proof that these fancies were practically worked upon, occurs in the life of John of Beverley. "One day John entered the nunnery of Weta-dun (supposed to be Watton in Yorkshire), where the abbess called him to visit a sister in whom the operation of bleeding had been followed by dangerous symptoms. When he was informed that she had been bled on the fourth day of the moon, he blamed the abbess severely for her ignorance; 'for,' said he, 'I remember that Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory, said that bleeding was very dangerous at that time, when both the light of the moon and the flood of the ocean are on the increase.'"

With one good anecdote of the poet Aldhelm, who was abbot of Malmesbury, we take leave of Mr Wright's volume:—"Aldhelm had observed, with pain, that the peasantry were becoming negligent in their religious duties, and that no sooner was the church service ended, than they all hastened to their homes and labours, and could with difficulty be persuaded to attend to the exhortations of the preacher. He watched the occasion, and stationed himself in the character of a minstrel on the bridge over which the people had to pass, and soon collected a crowd of hearers by the beauty of his verse; when he found that he had gained possession of their attention, he gradually introduced, among the popular poetry which he was reciting to them, words of a more serious nature, till at length he succeeded in impressing upon their minds a truer feeling of religious devotion; 'whereas, if,' as William of Malmesbury observes, 'he had proceeded with severity and excommunication, he would have made no impression whatever upon them.'"

THE TWO BEGGAR BOYS:

A STORY FOR THE YOUNG.

"I CAN'T encourage a boy of your age in begging," said a gentleman to a little lad, apparently about ten years old, who intreated him to give him a halfpenny; "you should work, not beg."

"I have not got any work," answered the boy.

"Would you do it if you had?" inquired the gentleman.

"Yes," said the boy.

"What are your parents?" asked the gentleman.

"My father's dead," replied the child, "and my mother begs, and sends me out to beg; but I keep away from her, because she beats me."

"And where do you sleep at night, when you don't go home?"

"Anywhere I can—under a hedge, or in a doorway; sometimes I get into a stable-yard or an empty cart."

"That's a miserable life," returned the gentleman; "come with me, and I'll give you a trial. What is your name?"

"George Macmahon."

"Come along, then, George Macmahon. Now, if you are wise, this may prove the turn of your fortune; but remember, beginnings are slow: you must work first for small wages, till you are stronger, and able to earn more; but if I see that you are willing to work, I will do what I can for you."

This gentleman, whose name was Herriott, was the overseer of some public works; so, as George's capabilities were yet but limited, he put a hammer into his hand, and set him to break stones, promising that if he were diligent, and broke as many as he could, he should have eightpence a-day, and a place to sleep in at night.

George Macmahon set to his work apparently with a good heart. The stones were not very hard, and they had already been broken into small pieces—his business was to break them still smaller; and when he exerted his strength and struck them a good blow, he could do it very well. However, when he had worked a little while, he began to make rather long pauses between his strokes, and to look a good deal about him, especially when any well-dressed persons passed that way; and once or twice, when he thought no one was looking, he threw down his hammer, and applied himself to his former trade of begging for a halfpenny to buy a bit of bread. When he had, in this way, made out some three or four hours, he was accosted by an acquaintance of his, a boy about his own age, who was also a beggar. The only difference in their situation was, that the mother of the latter was very sickly and unable to support him; but she did not beat him, and would not have sent him to beg if she could have done anything better for him.

"What!" said the new-comer, whose name was John Reid; "have you got leave to break stones?"

"Yes," answered George, "a gentleman has given me a job; I am to have eightpence a-day, and a place to sleep in;" and George at that moment felt himself a person of considerable consequence.

"I wish he would give me a job too," said John; "do you think he would?"

"You can ask him, if you like," answered George; "that's his office, and I saw him go in there just now." So John presented himself to Mr Herriott, and said he should be very glad if he would give him a job, as he had done to George Macmahon; and after asking him a few questions, Mr Herriott supplied him with a hammer, and set him to work.

It was quite evident, from the way he set about it, that it was John Reid's intention to break as many stones as he could; and accordingly, by night his heap was much larger than George Macmahon's, although he had not worked so long; but then he hit them with all his might, did not make long pauses between his strokes to look about him, and, when any well-dressed persons passed, instead of slipping away to beg for a halfpenny, he only grasped his hammer with more firmness, gave harder blows, and appeared more intent upon his work; for, thought he, it makes one look respectable to be employed, but every body despises beggars. At night they each got their eightpence, for although George had not worked as hard as he could, Mr Herriott did not wish to discourage him; and having bought themselves some supper, they were conducted to a shed, where they passed the night on some clean straw—a much more comfortable bed than they were accustomed to. On the following morning, they both repaired to their toil at the sound of the bell—John Reid with rather augmented vigour; but after the first half hour, George Macmahon's strokes became lighter and his pauses longer, till at last he threw down his hammer, and burst out into a fit of laughter.

"What's the matter?" said John; "what are you laughing at?" "Why, I am laughing to think what fools the gentlefolks must be to suppose we'll work for eightpence a-day at breaking these stones, when we can earn a shilling a-day by begging, and our food besides; for people give us enough to eat at their doors, and then we can spend our money in drink."

"But, then," said John, "we are only beggars, and that's such a disgrace."

"Disgrace!" said George, "pooh! who cares for that!—surely it's better to live without working, if one can!"

"I don't know that," said John; "besides, you know, if we go on begging, we shall never get to be better off—we shall always be beggars to the last; but if we work when we are young, we may grow rich by the time we are old, and live like the gentlefolks."

"It's a long time to wait for what may never happen," replied George; "besides, I'm tired of work—it makes my arm ache: there's a carriage coming down the hill with some ladies in it!" added he suddenly, and away he ran to beseech the ladies to give him a halfpenny to buy a bit of bread. They threw him sixpence. "Now, look here," said he to his comrade; "here's nearly a day's wages just for the asking; one must break a pretty lot of stones before one earns sixpence. Come along; throw down your hammer, and let's be off before Mr Herriott sees us."

"No, I shan't," responded John; "I shall stay here and break the stones; but I wish, if you mean to go, you would call and tell my mother where I am, and that she shall see me on Sunday."

"Sunday!" cried George; "you don't mean to stay here till Sunday, do you?"

"Yes, I do," said John; "I'll stay as long as they'll keep me."

George went away laughing at the folly of his companion; and when he met Jane Reid begging, he told her she might expect to see John before Sunday, for he was sure his arm would be so tired that he would soon give up breaking stones.

But George was mistaken: John's arm did ache at first, it is true, but it soon got accustomed to the labour, and then it ceased to ache, and grew daily stronger. Mr Herriott paid him his eightpence every night, and let him sleep in the shed; but he took little more notice of him, for he looked upon it as pretty certain that he would follow the same course as George Macmahon had done, and disappear; and he was justified in thinking so, for he had put several beggar boys to the same proof, and not one of them had held out above a couple of days. However, when a week had elapsed, and John Reid was still hammering away as hard as ever, he began to think better of him—spoke to him encouragingly as he passed, showed him how to do his work with the greatest ease to himself, and occasionally sent him out a slice of bread and meat from his own kitchen. In short, John Reid grew into favour, and Mr Herriott began to think of putting him into some employment more fit for him than breaking stones, which he was scarcely strong enough to do yet, with advantage to himself or his employer. He therefore took him off the road, and set him to remove some earth where they wanted to make a drain; and when this was done, he was sent amongst the carters, to help to load the carts and learn how to manage the horses. Thus, John got on from one thing to another, till he found the way to make himself really useful; and as he always did whatever was given him to do to the best of his abilities, his services were soon in general request among the men; and John's place became no sinecure. He worked hard all day, but then his wages were raised to six shillings a-week—he had enough to eat, and he could afford to pay for half a bed, which was a comfort he had very seldom enjoyed; and then he had

the satisfaction of seeing that he was getting on, and gaining the confidence of his employers. It is true, he was often extremely tired after his day's work, yet he felt contented and happy, and rejoiced that he had not followed the example of George Macmahon; for he had earned a treasure that George knew nothing of—the treasure of hope—hope for the future—hope that he might some day have good clothes and a nice house, and live comfortably "like the gentlefolks," and be called Sir, as Mr Herriott was; for John thought it must be very pleasant to be respected and looked up to. And John was quite right—it was a very legitimate object of ambition; and it would be well if it were more generally entertained amongst the poor, because there is but one road to success, and that is by the way of industry and honesty. John felt this, and that was the reason he liked his work: he saw that it made him respectable, because it is respectable to be useful. Indeed, the being useful is the source of the only true respect mankind can ever enjoy; all the homage which is yielded to their other attributes—wealth, station, and power—unless these are beneficially exercised, that is, made useful, is only factitious; a sentiment compounded of fear, baseness, and self-interest.

Amongst the persons under Mr Herriott was a young man called Gale, who acted as clerk and book-keeper. His connexions were in rather a superior condition of life; but having been himself imprudent, and reduced to distress, interest had been made with Mr Herriott's employers, who had appointed him to the situation he held. But adversity had not remedied the faults of his character; he was still too fond of company and convivial parties, and not unfrequently, for the sake of yielding to their seductions, neglected his business.

One Saturday, about three months after John Reid's first introduction to Mr Herriott, that gentleman had desired Gale to go to the town, which was some two miles distant, and bring back the money that would be wanted to pay the men's wages at night; but in the morning Gale forgot it, and in the afternoon there was some amusement in the way that made him dislike the expedition. So he looked about for some one to send in his place, and at last fixed upon John, because he could be the best spared, and was the least likely to be missed, his work being of such various kinds, that if he were not seen busy in one spot he would be supposed to be busy in another. So he dispatched John with a note, desiring the money might be given to the bearer; and although the agent thought the bearer rather an odd person to be entrusted with so large a sum, he did not consider himself justified in withholding the money; and consequently John received a bundle of bank-notes, which he buttoned carefully up in his pocket, and set off back again. On his way he fell in with Maggy Macmahon, George's mother. She was begging; and seeing that he looked decent, and no longer wore his beggar's rags, she told him that she supposed, now he was grown such a great man, he could afford to give a poor body a penny. John had some pence in his pocket; and more, perhaps, from a little pardonable vanity than from charity—for he knew Maggy to be a bad woman—he unbuttoned his pocket in order to comply with her request; but he had no sooner done so than she caught sight of the bank notes, and made a snatch at them, calling him, at the same time, a young thief, and asking him where he had stole all that money from. Failing, however, in her object, she tried to seize him by the collar, but John slipped through her fingers and took to his heels. She ran after him for some time, calling "Stop thief!"—but as there was nobody at hand to stop him, and as, being half intoxicated, she could not overtake him herself, she soon gave up the chase, and John arrived safe with his charge, and delivered it to Gale. But Maggy, who had heard from her own son where John was employed, was shrewd enough to guess that he had been sent to fetch the money to pay the week's wages, and that, probably, on the following or some other Saturday, he might be employed on the same errand; and as the road was not much frequented, it occurred to her, that, with a coadjutor, if not alone, she could hardly fail to obtain the booty.

It happened as Maggy had expected. John having been found a faithful messenger on the first occasion, the next time Gale's engagements made it inconvenient for him to go himself, he dispatched him again. John went, accordingly, and received the money; but remembering what had happened on his former expedition, and having the fear of Maggy before his eyes, he hid the money this time in his bosom, resolving to run all the way back, and not to answer her if she accosted him. But Maggy was too cunning for him; she had watched him up to the town; and not doubting the purpose of his errand, she waylaid him on his return, selecting, for her purpose, the most lonely part of the road, and taking her son George with her as a reinforcement. Thus, when the poor boy approached, she suddenly darted out from her concealment, and seizing him by the arm, told him that if he did not give her the money he was carrying she would kill him; but instead of doing what she desired, John cried out for help, and struggled hard to get away, and as he was an active boy, he did at last succeed in releasing himself from her grasp; but unfortunately, just as he was taking to his heels, his clothes having been loosened in the scuffle, the bundle of notes fell from his bosom to the ground, and were in an instant

picked up by George, who had been hitherto an inactive spectator of the conflict. As soon as Maggy saw that her object was attained, she made no further effort to detain John; but deaf to his intreaties to restore him the money, she, with her son, started off in an opposite direction, declaring, that if he attempted to follow her she would take his life. But John, too much alarmed at his loss to heed her threats, persisted in following her, hoping to meet some one to whom he could appeal for assistance; but Maggy obviated this danger by cutting across the fields, till at length, finding she could not get rid of him, she turned suddenly round, and with a savage blow felled him to the earth. By the time John had risen and wiped the blood from his face, Maggy and her son were far out of his reach, so there was nothing left for him but to pursue his way home, which he did with a heavy heart, greatly fearing that this misfortune would bring him much trouble, and perhaps be the occasion of his losing his situation.

As may be imagined, Gale, when he heard John's story, was extremely frightened, and, consequently, extremely angry, for he knew very well the fault was his own, and that his neglect of duty would now be disclosed to Mr Herriott; and as fear and anger are apt to render people very unjust, he refused to believe John's account of the matter, accusing him, in one breath, of carelessness, and in the next of dishonesty, threatening to turn him off and to have him up to the police; but as he could not do either of his own authority, he began by dragging him to Mr Herriott's office, and presenting him to that gentleman in the guise of a culprit brought up for chastisement. After reproving Gale severely for delegating a commission of such a nature to another, and especially to a boy who had so lately been taken off the streets, Mr Herriott turned to John to hear what he had to say for himself, not doubting that the temptation had been too strong for a lad brought up under circumstances so unfavourable, and that he was really guilty of appropriating the money. "But who has given you that blow on the face?" inquired he, on observing that John's nose had been bleeding, and that his mouth was swollen.

"Maggy Macmahon," said he, "because I ran after her to try to get the money back; and after she had knocked me down, she ran so fast that I could not overtake her; but if you'd be pleased to send to where she lives, perhaps you might catch her and get it yet."

This suggestion, whether honestly offered or not, Mr Herriott thought it right to follow; so, having hastily gathered an outline of the case from John, he dispatched him, with three of his most trusty workmen, to look after Maggy, giving the men strict orders not to let John escape, nor even to lose sight of him for a moment. But neither Maggy nor George was to be found at their lodgings, neither did they return there all night; so on the following day, the police having been put upon the alert, the expedition presented themselves before Mr Herriott with John still in their custody, but without any tidings of the money. The disappearance of the mother and son was in some degree a confirmation of the boy's story, and disposed Mr Herriott to listen with a more believing ear to what he said. Still it was possible that there might have been collusion amongst the parties, and that John's share of the booty was somewhere secured for him till he could accept it without danger; and then it occurred to Mr Herriott that very likely it had been given to his mother. The police were therefore desired to investigate the matter, and keep a close eye upon Jane Reid's proceedings; but, on inquiry, it turned out that Jane Reid was in the hospital, dying of a fever, and had been there for some days. So far the circumstances were favourable to John, as was also the discovery that he had brought the money safely on a former occasion; therefore, though still uncertain what to think, Mr Herriott did not turn him away, but merely kept him under strict surveillance, desiring the men he could trust to lose sight of him as little as possible. Thus, John went on as before, doing his duty as well as he could, but he was not so happy, because he felt he was suspected; and he saw little hopes of his justification, for Maggy and George returned no more to their lodging, nor did the police succeed in tracing them.

However, fortunately, when people intend to do right, the being watched is much to their advantage; and so it proved with John, for the more narrowly his conduct was observed, the more reason Mr Herriott saw to approve it; and as time advanced, and his acquaintance with John increased, he became thoroughly satisfied that the account the boy had given of the notes had been correct, and that he had actually been robbed of them. This conviction was accompanied by a great augmentation of interest for John, who he felt had been injured by the suspicion, and had thus had a superfluous difficulty thrown in his upward path, and one that, in a less well-disposed boy, might have discouraged him altogether from well-doing; for, besides the mortification of being doubted, John had a good many crosses to bear from Gale, who resented the loss of the money as the cause of his own exposure, and took many opportunities of making the culprit feel the weight of his displeasure. But Mr Herriott's favour and good opinion were the road to fortune, and John seeing that, bore Gale's ill will with patience; and accordingly, in spite of it, he rose from one thing to another, till he found himself in a situation of trust and authority, being employed as clerk and overseer

under Mr Herriott, with a salary of one hundred pounds a year. This happened when John was twenty-five, exactly fifteen years after the time when he had found George breaking stones, and had asked Mr Herriott to let him have a hammer and give him a job.

John Reid was now a very happy young man; and he was the more happy from the contrast betwixt the present and the past, his comfortable and respectable situation being very unlike the prospect that had opened itself to him in his early years, when, a beggar born, he saw no hopes of ever being anything else; and nothing else would he ever have been, had he not had the wisdom to seize fortune by the forelock, and having once got hold of her, taken good care not to let her go again. In short, though John had never read Shakspeare, he acted as if he was aware that

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

The opportunity had offered—John had seized it—George had refused it—and these reflections led him often to think of George, and to wonder what was become of him; the more especially as he could not but remember that George was, in fact, the humble instrument of his own good fortune; for had he not seen him breaking the stones, it never would have occurred to him to make the application for himself.

It happened, on the occasion of some public rejoicing, that the men were allowed to leave work early, and some indulgences were given to permit of their spending the evening convivially together; but Mr Herriott particularly charged John to see that there was no drunkenness or disorder; and with this view, John put on his hat and cloak a little before midnight, in order to ascertain that the party had broken up, and that the men had retired peaceably to their beds. It was in the depth of winter, the weather was very cold, and the snow was lying three feet deep upon the ground. Having seen that the place where the men had supped was empty, and that all was apparently quiet in the cottages where they slept, Reid gladly turned towards his own dwelling, for the cold gusts of wind that seemed to blow through him, and the sharp sleet that drove against his face, brought out in bold relief the comforts of his tidily-furnished room, bright fire, and wholesome bed; but as he passed a temporary building which had been run up to defend some stores from the weather, he fancied he heard a groan. He listened, and it was repeated. "Ah!" thought he, "after all, I am afraid they have not been so steady as I had hoped; this is some drunken fellow, I suppose, paying the penalty of his excesses;" and he turned into the shed to see who it was. He had a lantern in his hand, and by its dim light he perceived a bundle of rags in one corner, whence the sounds proceeded, and on touching the object with his foot, a face was lifted up from the heap—a face on which death was imprinted, and which, with its hollow eyes, stared upon him with a meaningless stare, that showed that the senses were paralysed by the wretchedness to which the body was reduced. Seeing that this poor creature must die if he remained exposed to the cold of the night, John called up one of the workmen, and with his assistance removed him to a warmer situation; and there, after a little while, the heat of the stove, and a glass of warm brandy and water which they procured from Mr Herriott's house, restored the sufferer to consciousness. John then offered him something to eat; but he shook his head, and said, if it had come earlier it might have done him good, but that now he believed he was past eating. And so he was—and yet he was but a youth; but intemperance when he had money, and want and exposure to the inclemency of the weather when he had none, had done the work of years, and he had reached the last stage of his pilgrimage upon earth. In the morning, Mr Herriott, hearing of the circumstance, came to see him, and perceiving that death was fast approaching, he asked him where he came from, and if he had any friends. The man lifted up his heavy eyelids on hearing the interrogation; but when his eyes fell on Mr Herriott's features, a ray of intelligence and recognition shot from them. "Ah, sir!" said he, "I know you, but you have forgotten me."

"Did I ever see you before?" said Mr Herriott. "You once gave me a job, sir, and said you'd be a friend to me," answered the miserable creature; "but I hadn't the sense to see what was for my own good. There was a boy, called John Reid."

"Ah!" said Mr Herriott, interrupting him, for he recognised at once who the stranger was, and saw the importance of seizing the opportunity to clear his friend John's character from the shadow of an imputation—"I remember you now, and John Reid, too; but John got into trouble about some money that he lost betwixt this and the town. Did you ever hear anything of it?"

"Did he lose his situation for it?" said the dying man, making an effort to raise himself on his elbow—"that was hard—very hard, for he couldn't help it; we took the money from him, I and my mother—but it did us no good; it was soon gone, and then she took to thieving to get more, and made me thieve too. It's too late now; but if I'd staid and broken the stones, it might have been different with me this day—but I was idle, and let the chance slip by me, and I never got another. God bless you, sir! I have lived a bad life—but let me have Christian burial, and the prayers of the church over my coffin." And thus died George Macmahon, the beggar, who refused to work, because

he could get a shilling a-day and his food without the inconvenience of labour. But John Reid, who reflected that a beggar can never be anything but a beggar, and who thought it must be pleasant to be respected, and wear good clothes, and be called "Sir, like the gentlefolks," lived to see his honest ambition realised; and after passing his existence in peace, plenty, and contentment—having risen, step by step, till, at Mr Herriott's death, he was appointed to that gentleman's situation—died at a good old age, on a bed surrounded by his children and his grandchildren, to whom he left a comfortable provision, and the blessed inheritance of a good name.

BITS FROM THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

RELATION OF FACTORY LABOUR TO DISEASE AND MORTALITY.

THIS subject was treated in a paper read by Mr Noble, surgeon, Manchester, before the Statistical Section. The author began by adverting to the diversity of opinion which prevailed among medical authorities in reference to the influence of the factory system on the health of the operatives employed in it. Among the witnesses examined before the Parliamentary committee on factory labour, a few years ago, the metropolitan members of the medical profession had been almost unanimous in the opinion, that the factory system was highly prejudicial to health, and that it ought to be considered as the fruitful parent of consumption and scrofula. On that occasion, one witness, who, in the early part of his career, had had some experience in the centre of manufacturing industry, had made bold to assert that scrofulous diseases were immeasurably more abundant in Manchester than in London and other parts of the kingdom, and that the proportion in which that disease was developed could not be less than one in ten. On the other hand, there were many medical men who contended, that factory labour tended to fortify those engaged in it against scrofula and consumption. Amid such conflicting testimony, it was difficult to come to any satisfactory conclusion; but perhaps the best mode of arriving at the truth would be by leaving the opinions of men alone, and inquiring into the facts of the case. It was with this view, then, that he proposed to inquire to what extent the positive results obtained by the registrar-general confirm the idea, that consumption is more frequent in Manchester than in less densely-populated districts. But, before proceeding with the details of his proposed plan, he might just remark, with regard to the national system of registration, that, although defective in some respects, it would be a valuable auxiliary to our other means of investigation, especially on all questions relative to epidemic and contagious diseases, and especially in the prosecution of such inquiries as the present. The numerical statements he was about to submit were taken from the third and last published report of the registrar-general, and they applied exclusively to the year 1839. According to the census of 1831 (that of 1841 not having been obtained at the period of compiling the registrar's last reports), there were resident in Manchester and Salford 49,392 families; and the total deaths registered in 1839 amounted to 9223, of which 1454 are recorded as having been from consumption. This was, in round numbers, in the proportion of about one death annually from consumption to every 34 families; and in the total deaths from all causes, of three from consumption in every nineteen. Now, certainly, these facts furnished a very decided proof of the extensive prevalence of the disease in this district; and it might also seem to afford a decided confirmation of the doctrine, that factory employment tends to produce consumption. If we extended our inquiries to other parts of the kingdom, this supposition was still farther confirmed. In Essex, for example, with a population of 62,403 families, the deaths from consumption during the above year were less by 250 than in Manchester, although the population of Essex, in 1831, was 13,000 families above that of Manchester. If the inquiry were to rest here, the inevitable inference would be, that the statements as to the great prevalence of consumption in Manchester and its neighbourhood were strikingly confirmed by the facts mentioned. But it ought always to be kept in mind, that, independent of employment in factories, there were many influences at work in large towns which necessarily tended to shorten life. So far as the working classes were concerned, the confined atmosphere of their dwellings (many of them residing in cellars), the irregularity of their employment, and the variations in the rate of wages, all tended to increase the rate of mortality. But although the rate of mortality in Essex was greater than that of Manchester, it appeared from the returns that, compared with the number of deaths from all causes, the cases of consumption were actually fewer in this factory district than in agricultural Essex, being in the latter as 4 in every 21, and in the former but as 3 in 19. Again, if a comparison were drawn between Manchester and another agricultural district, the same result would be obtained. Taking a district which embraced Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and the southern part of Lincolnshire, comprising a population of 67,351 families, the deaths from all causes, in 1839, were 7306, and those from consumption 1308, or 1 death from the latter cause in every 5; showing, as in the case of Essex, a much lower rate of mortality than

that of these districts, but a greater proportion of deaths from pulmonary complaints. But there was another mode of ascertaining whether factory labour tended to foster consumption. Let them compare other large towns, where there were no factories, with Manchester, and see not only what the rate of mortality was, but also whether the number of deaths from consumption were not as great as they were in that chief seat of the factory system. For example, he would take the case of Liverpool and West Derby, a district resembling this in size and extent of population, but in which there was hardly any thing in the shape of manufactures. In 1831, the population of Liverpool and West Derby was 43,026 families, which was 6000 below that of Manchester and Salford at the same period, and yet the number of deaths registered for 1831 was 9181, which was only 42 less than the number of deaths in Manchester; while the deaths from consumption amounted to 1762, or 300 in excess of those in this town. In Birmingham, where there were no factories, the population in 1831 was 23,934 families, and in 1839, the registered deaths were 3639; those from consumption being 668, which was a rather smaller proportion than in Manchester. In London; the rate of mortality was much lower than in Manchester. In 1831, the metropolitan districts contained 373,209 families; the deaths were 45,441; those from consumption 7104, being in the proportion of two deaths annually for every 105 families, or in the proportion of three out of every nineteen deaths from all causes. From these numerical statements, which were of unquestionable authenticity, it was evident that Manchester and Salford were much more free from consumption than some other large towns. Thus far, then, they had looked in vain for evidence in favour of the assertion, that the factory system is favourable to the development of pulmonary consumption. But it might still be urged that, although the total number of deaths from consumption in Manchester were less than in the other towns he had named, yet that, of the fatal cases of pulmonary disease which do occur, an undue preponderance would be found among the factory population. With a view to ascertain what grounds there might be for this notion, he had, by permission of the superintendent-registrar of this district, gone over the books for this district, relating to the years 1838, 1839, and 1840. Believing that three years would form a fair average, he had taken the death-books of the township of Manchester for that period, and selected therefrom the age and stated occupation of all persons registered as having died of consumption, phthisis, or decline, between the ages of fifteen and forty. He had selected the township of Manchester, to the exclusion of Ardwick, Hulme, and Chorlton-upon-Medlock, because he thought it contained a fair proportion of the factory population, and might therefore be considered a tolerably just type of the whole. He had limited the inquiry to those persons between fifteen and forty, because he considered it likely that, if occupation of any kind shortened life by inducing consumption, the affection would in most cases be developed, and would terminate fatally, within those limits; and because, in omitting from calculations the cases marked consumption or decline below fifteen and above forty, he was most likely to embrace the largest average of real cases of consumption. He found, then, that in the three years he had named, the township of Manchester, with a population of about 160,000 souls, and with an average of 6000 deaths annually, there were 1141 registered deaths from consumption; and, as nearly as could be ascertained, 174 of these were of persons working in factories, or somewhat less than one-sixth of the whole.

It might still be said, however, that factory labour prematurely exhausted the vital energies, and gave rise to an unusually early mortality from various chronic diseases. But if such were the fact, they surely expect to find such early mortality manifested in the cases registered as consumption. Anxious to see how far this was the case, he had classified the ages of the 1141 deaths from consumption in the township of Manchester, and the result was as follows:—

AGES.	DEATHS.
15 and under 20,	195
20 .. 25,	243
25 .. 30,	260
30 .. 35,	252
35 .. 40,	220

Now, on comparing these numbers with data of a similar nature regarding other towns, he found a most remarkable coincidence. Take, for example, the table which Sir James Clarke had given, in his work on tubercular phthisis, of the proportion, at different ages above 15, of 1000 deaths from pulmonary consumption, and it would be found to approach very closely to that he had given. In a table compiled from the mortality returns of Berlin, Chester, Carlisle, Paris, Edinburgh, Nottingham, and Philadelphia, that writer had shown that the deaths at different ages were in the following proportions:—

AGES.	DEATHS.
15 and under 20,	90 in every 1000
20 .. 25,	265
25 .. 30,	240
30 .. 35,	240
35 .. 40,	240

It would be seen, therefore, by comparing these numbers with those in the preceding table, that they bore very nearly the same relation to each other in both cases; from which it might fairly be concluded, that the population of Manchester is not at all more liable

to the early invasion of this malady than that of other places. The general conclusion from all these facts was, that manufacturing habits do not exert any unusual influence in the production or premature development of pulmonary consumption, seeing that the vital statistics of this metropolis of the cotton manufacture, so far as they have been analysed and compared with similar data from other towns, exhibit no preponderance of deaths from that cause, but, on the contrary, a smaller rate of mortality, compared with the number of deaths from other causes, than was to be found in the rural districts. In conclusion, Mr Noble remarked, that he was far from entertaining the opinion which some did, that factory labour was protective from scrofulous diseases, and conducive to general good health. On the contrary, he believed that it was most prejudicial to sound health; but at the same time he felt satisfied that in this respect it differed very little, if at all, from most other occupations at which the great mass of the working population in towns were obliged to labour for their livelihood.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

THE COUNT DE BUFFON.

GEORGE LOUIS LECLERC BUFFON, the most popular writer upon natural history, perhaps, of any age or country, was born at Montbard, in the department of Cote-D'Or, within the ancient province of Burgundy, on the 7th September 1707. His father was a counsellor of parliament in that district, and possessed a handsome fortune, enabling him to give his son the advantage of a very careful and liberal education. Dijon was the scene of young Buffon's primary studies, which speedily took the direction of science and natural history, although his father was desirous that he should train himself for the legal profession. It is said that an intimacy formed at this early period with a young English nobleman, Lord Kingston, and his tutor, a very accomplished person, had no slight effect in turning the attention of Buffon to scientific pursuits. It was arranged that he should travel with these associates, and accordingly he passed through France and Italy in their company. During this journey, ere he had quite attained his majority, he succeeded, by the death of his mother, to a large fortune, estimated by some biographers at twelve thousand pounds sterling annually. Thus handsomely provided with means, he within a few succeeding years settled down into that continuous course of study, mingled with elegant enjoyment, in which he persisted to the close of his life. His time was chiefly spent at his pleasant retreat at Montbard, and partly, also, amid the accomplished and scientific society of Paris.

Before he became known in the literary world, Buffon had visited England, and it was in some measure with the view of perfecting himself in the language of that country that he undertook those tasks which first brought his name before the public. He translated and published the "Vegetable Statics" of Hale, and also the "Fluxions" of Newton, works which sufficiently indicate the character of his favourite studies. The able prefaces attached to these versions gained for him considerable reputation, and he soon augmented it by original papers read before the Academy of Sciences, of which he was elected a member in 1733. Mathematics, physics, and rural economics, formed the subjects of these various essays; and one of them, at least, attracted general if not universal attention. The object of Buffon, in the case in question, was to determine the possibility of the feat ascribed to Archimedes at the siege of Syracuse. Historians have related of that philosopher, that, by means of powerful reflecting mirrors, he set fire to the hostile and besieging ships "at the distance of a bowshot." After many preparatory experiments, Buffon constructed a mirror, formed of 168 pieces of silvered glass, each six inches square, and by the combined action of ninety-eight of these divisions (which could be used singly or collectively) he set fire to a tarred and sulphured plank at the distance of 126 feet, while the sun's rays were ordinarily powerful. A plank covered with wool was fired at 138 feet with 112 mirrors; chips of sulphured and charcoaled wood were ignited at 250 feet by 154 mirrors in two and a-half minutes; and 128 mirrors set fire to a tarred plank at 150 feet almost instantaneously. Many similar experiments were performed by Buffon, and they may be fairly held to have determined for ever the perfect possibility of the combustion of the Roman ships by Archimedes.

These inquiries show that Buffon would unquestionably have attained to a high rank in almost any

branch of physical science which it might have been his choice to pursue. But his talents and time were destined to be absorbed by other studies. His friend Dufay, Intendant of the Royal Gardens and Cabinet, chanced to be seized with a mortal illness in the midst of zealous schemes for the furtherance of his peculiar science, and wrote from his bed to the minister, pointing out Buffon as the man best qualified to take his place. In consequence, the latter, in the year 1739, when only thirty-two, was installed in the vacated office.

A man of inferior genius might have been startled at the thought, if, indeed, he ever conceived it, of reducing to order the immense quantity of materials which had been accumulated from time to time in relation to natural science, and which stood, when they came before the new intendant, in the most chaotic shape—a mass valuable, indeed, in parts, but, as a whole, rude, indigested, without form and void. Buffon, however, did not shrink from the prospect before him. Ere long, he had conceived the plan of a great systematic work, embracing the history of every branch of animal nature, and he entered with ardour on its execution. At the same time, he saw the necessity, with an end so vast in view, of obtaining the aid of men who were competent to afford it, and who might supply deficiencies of which he himself was conscious. The most valuable assistant thus engaged by him was Daubenton, to whose indefatigable industry he owed all, or nearly all, the minute anatomical researches, drawings, and preparations, upon which his own toils were based. The comprehensive and ingenious theories, the attractive pictures of animal habits, the brilliant descriptions, the comparisons and classifications which permanently illuminated and popularised this most interesting branch of human knowledge—all these things flowed from the genius of Buffon himself. Ten years passed away, subsequently to 1739, ere he and his colleague were prepared to enter on their view of natural history, which began with quadrupeds, though this was preceded by a "Theory of the Earth" from the pen of Buffon. The latter composition is ingenious and eloquent, but its hypotheses have been overthrown by later discoveries in geology. Betwixt 1749 and 1769 fifteen large volumes appeared, amply working out the great schemes of the master-writer, and embracing accounts of the entire animal creation. Supplements, several in number, followed in succession, each adding new facts to some department or other of the previous whole.

Buffon had high and peculiar merit in devoting his lifetime, as he did, to science. He possessed a noble and commanding person, and a handsome fortune—ready inlets to all the gaieties of luxurious society. In addition to these seductive advantages, he was naturally fond of finery and display, and of an indolent temperament. Vanity was also shown to be one of his foibles, by his liking for reading his compositions to all around him. Yet during the greater proportion of his mature years, with all these weaknesses, he spent not less than fourteen hours a-day in study. He himself, when asked in his advanced years how he had contrived to do so much, replied, "Have I not passed fifty years at my desk?" Nor were these habits of application easily acquired. It is related that, distrustful of himself in his early days, he was compelled to order, and even to bribe, his servant to force him from bed at a certain hour, in spite of all orders and intreaties which might be weakly given at the time to the contrary—a proceeding which reminds one of the story of Ulysses, when he tied himself to the mast to listen to the Sirens, and commanded his men to disregard all his calls on them to stop. When he had settled into studious habits, he regulated his time in the following manner:—"After he was dressed, he dictated letters, and overlooked his domestic affairs; and at six o'clock he commenced his studies at the pavilion called the Tower of St Louis. This pavilion was situated at the extremity of the garden, about a furlong from the house; and the only furniture which it contained was a large wooden secretary and an arm-chair. No pictures relieved the naked appearance of the apartment, or distracted the thoughts of the learned possessor. The entrance was by green folding-doors: the walls were painted green, and the interior had the appearance of a chapel, on account of the elevation of the roof. Within this was another cabinet, where Buffon resided the greater part of the year, on account of the coldness of the other apartment, and where he composed the greater number of his works. It was a small square building, situated on the side of a terrace, and was ornamented with drawings of birds and beasts. Prince Henry of Prussia called it the cradle of natural history; and Rousseau, before he entered it, used to fall on his knees and kiss the threshold. At nine o'clock, Buffon usually took an hour's rest; and his breakfast, which consisted of a piece of bread and two glasses of wine, was brought to the pavilion. When he had written two hours after breakfast, he returned to the house. At dinner he spent a considerable portion of time, and indulged in all the gaieties and trifles which occurred at table. After dinner he slept an hour in his room, took a solitary walk, and during the rest of the evening he either conversed with his family or

guests, or sat at his desk examining the papers which were submitted to his judgment. At nine o'clock he went to bed, to prepare himself for the same routine of judgment and pleasure. In this manner were spent no fewer than fifty years of his life."

It would be a piece of presumption to make any critical observations, at this time of day, on the great work which thus occupied the existence of Buffon, and which ever has been one of the most popular works in the range of literature, being written in a most attractive and eloquent style, and correct in a vast number of its general facts and descriptions. To this work he added one on "Minerals," and some smaller treatises. The author of these obtained high and deserved honours from his king and country. In 1771, Louis XIV. erected his estate into a Compté, and, accordingly, he is best known by the title of Count. Buffon's private happiness was also secured, and his fortunes augmented, by his marriage, in 1752, with Mademoiselle Saint Belin. The fruit of this union was one son, who was unfortunate enough, it may be here mentioned, to fall a victim to the popular fury in the days of the Revolution.

The Count de Buffon lived to an advanced age, but his latter years were rendered painful by the malady of the stone. He nevertheless persisted in his studies, and refused to submit to an operation, though urged to it on all hands. The consequence of this imprudent obstinacy was, that, after eight years of severe torture, he sank under the complaint, on the 16th of April 1788, in his eighty-first year. Fifty small stones were found in his body on a posthumous examination. He was buried at Montbard, and twenty thousand persons, including the most distinguished men of France of the time, assembled to witness the ceremony, and do honour to his memory.

Alas, for human weakness! Of these twenty thousand spectators it would be curious to know how many were present within two years afterwards, when, through the popular hatred to all that savoured of nobility, the coffin of the naturalist was torn from its resting-place, and his monument razed to the ground!

This sketch may be fitly closed by a description of the house of Buffon from the pen of Miss Costello, who recently visited the place, in her pilgrimage to Auvergne from Picardy:—

"All the valley, and all up the steep coteaux, is cultivated chiefly with vines, which love a rocky soil. Masses of grey rock appear now and then amidst the green, and give a solemn aspect to the landscape. On an enormous block of this stone was built, in ages remote and mysterious, a stupendous castle frowning on the very summit of the mountain, and commanding all the country around. It might be of Roman construction originally, as is recorded, and have served as a retreat to the feudal lords of the troublous times which succeeded. St Louis might have dwelt there, for his name is given to one of the towers; at all events, there are walls enough, tall, strong, and thick, to build a town, if it were possible to dislodge their masses from the earth. Buffon found this treasure on his estate, and resolved to improve the happy accident, at the same time desiring to exercise his benevolence, and benefit the industrious poor around him. Hundreds of labourers were employed by him to arrange the grounds below the fine ruins into terraces and platforms; and under his eye, and directed by his taste, rose magnificent alleys, smiling gardens, secluded bowers, and open walks; avenues of larches, sycamores, acacias, ash, beech, and lime, spread far over the space; the rugged mountain was transformed into an elegant series of promenades adorned with statues, vases, and all that a pure and classic taste could imagine. The tottering walls of the antique towers were repaired, the rubbish of years cleared away, and from stage to stage of La Grosse Tour de l'Aubespine the fine proportions of its beautiful *salles* brought forth; its windows relieved from these obstructions, and allowed to afford the magnificent views which they could present on all sides; its winding stairs renewed and made safe, and the whole fabric restored in all its original grandeur; the ruined walls planed and levelled where necessary; several of those most adapted were covered in, and chambers formed within them, without a stone being displaced or any change of form effected—the perfect groined roofs still asserting their antiquity, and the thick walls telling the tale of their age. Far beneath, at the last descent of his terraces, appears the fine habitation in which the creator of all these wonders resided, and where he received and entertained his numerous friends and guests; but it was not here that his valuable studies were carried on. In the most secluded part of his domain he chose an isolated tower, which he had fitted up with every precaution to exclude noise—double windows and thick doors. Here, surrounded by his books, and free from interruption, the great philosopher of nature meditated, casting his eyes round on a peaceful and silent scene, and allowing his mind full scope. The principal part of his works were written in this retreat, and it would seem to be still held as sacred, few persons venturing to penetrate into the interior, being content to be told, 'Here the great Buffon passed his hours in study,' as they look upwards and observe the walls of the pavilion. It is extremely to be regretted that this relic is in a manner neglected. It is true that the windows have within a few years been repaired, but nothing more has been done; and the opportunity of regaining the

fantail and desk, which were formerly used by Buffon, was allowed to escape. Nothing but bare walls remain; and gloomy and sad looks the old tower, peeping out from the garlands of a magnificent species of small-leaved ivy which almost envelop it."

LEIGH HUNT'S NEW POEM.

As the reverent homage which we pay to the Spensers and Miltons of our early literature does not preclude us from bestowing a lighter yet equally sincere tribute of praise upon its Herrieks and Carews, so, in like manner, our admiration for the transcendent luminaries of modern song should not prevent us from heartily acknowledging our obligations to those contemporary poets who stand to them in a similar relation. Leigh Hunt is one who has such claims upon us. Though not to be ranked with the Byrons and Wordsworths, he is not the less a true poet, and has produced things which the world will not readily allow to perish. As a distinguished critic remarked of him, he has endeavoured to combine the characteristics of our old and modern schools of poetry, following the former in painting freely from the eye, and, like the latter, accompanying his pictures with an expression of the congenial emotions of the mind, with which external objects are or may be associated. Hence, while full of freshness and liveliness, the poems of Mr Hunt are also marked by a prevailing cast of simple and natural reflectiveness. He is, moreover, a writer of no slight degree of originality, often catching a subject in new lights, and, by minute touches, giving the stamp of fidelity to his portraiture. His close attention to nature has, indeed, been indirectly the source of his chief faults, since he seems unluckily to forget that London nature is not universal nature, and through his very faithfulness to local truth, both as regards modes of language and of thought, has fallen into vulgarisms which materially deface the beauty of his compositions.

These general remarks have arisen from the publication of a new poem by Mr Hunt, entitled "The Palfrey." This tale in verse, we are told, is a variation, with additions of the writer's invention, of one of the old French narrative poems that preceded the time of Chaucer. The piece is a short light thing of little pretension, brisk and airy in matter and diction, and marked by many of the author's wonted characteristics, beauties as well as defects. An old knight, Sir Guy de Paul (the story says), lived at Kensington in the days of the first Edward; and with him lived one fair daughter, "the which he loved passing well," though he also loved his lands and his money bags to a degree that jarred with her comforts. She was beloved by a brave young knight, Sir William de la Barre, who was almost wholly dependent for his chance of wealth upon an old uncle, Sir Grey. "Go and bid Sir Grey come and satisfy me about the destination of his means," said the father to the lover, "and, if all is as it should be, I may give you my daughter." So, mounted upon his nephew's Palfrey, Sir Grey goes by persuasion to the mansion of Sir Guy, there falls in love himself with sweet Anne de Paul, and obtains her father's leave to bear away the reluctant damsel to his own halls to be wed. For safety, the aged and jealous wooer takes a number of old men with him on this journey, choosing night, too, as the fitting time for it; and so it falls out that Sir Guy,

"on a night, when all things round,
Save the trees and the moon, were sleeping sound,
From his casement in shadow beholds his child,
Bent in her weeping, yet away mild,
The fairest thing in the moon's fair ray,
Borne like some bundle of theft away;
Borne by a horde of old thieves away,
The guests and the guards of false Sir Grey.

She pray'd, but she spake out aloud no word;
She wept, but no breath of self-pity was heard.
Her woe was a sight for no dotards to see;
And yet not bereft of all balm was she;
One balm there was left her, one strange but rare,
Nay, one in the shape of a very despair—
To wit, the palfrey that went to bear
The knight de la Barre on his daily way
To her, and love, and false Sir Grey.
Him it had borne, her now it bore;
And weeping sweet, though more and more,
And praying for its master's bliss,
(Oh! no true love will scoff at this),
She stoop'd, and gave its neck a kiss."

The foolish old knight Sir Grey, then, his young bride-elect, and his grey-beard attendants, are on their way; and

"The Palfrey goes, the Palfrey goes,
Merrily still the Palfrey goes;
He goes a path he never chose,
Yet still full well the Palfrey goes."

Meanwhile, let us turn, with the third canto of the tale, to Sir William de la Barre, who, on the evening of that same journey, unconscious of his uncle's

* The Palfrey: a Love Story of Old Times. By Leigh Hunt. London: How and Parsons. 1842.

changed and selfish purposes, sat in his own poor home of Hendon Hall, entranced in dreams of joy.

"For he had heard of rare delights
Between those two old feasting knights,
And of a pillion, now and fair,
Ordauld to go some road as rare;
With whom? For what sweet rider's art?
Whose, but the dancer's at his heart,
The light, the bright, yet baimy she,
And who shall fetch her home but he?
Who else he summon'd speedily,
By the kind uncle full of glee,
To fetch away that ecstasy?
So, ever since that news, his ear,
Listening with a lofty fear,
Lest it catch one sound too late,
Stood open like a palace gate,
That waits the bride of some great king,
Heard with her trumpets travelling."

The close of this seems to us very musical, and contains a beautiful similitude. The young knight of whom it speaks, however, is disturbed amid his delusive dreams by a letter from Anne's father, announcing that the young lady is about to be wedded to his own uncle, and with her full consent! The poor young knight is thrown into an agony of shifting passion, and remains so till midnight, when he hears

"A tinkle of the house's bell;
What news can midnight have to tell?"

Ah! little dreams he at first of the truth. The grey-beard hand, who were that night engaged in carrying off the fair Anne de Paul, had, ere they started, taken something comfortable to ward off the night chills; and one by one, Sir Grey and all, they had sunk into a drowsiness, poetically said to be

"composed of spices fine,
Supper, fresh air, and old mul'd wine."

Anne, also, becomes soporose; but not so her Palfrey. The thoughtful animal keeps wide awake to catch the turning that led, not to Sir Grey's, but to the stalls of his true master, Sir William de la Barre. That turning he finds, and entering it, alone, and unnoticed by the sleepers,

"Goes neither to the right nor left,
But straight as honesty from theft,
Straight as the dainty to the tooth,
Straight as his lady's love and truth,
Straight for the point, the best of all,
Sir William's arms and Hendon Hall."

Yes, the fair Anne herself it was who, borne by the wise and wilful Palfrey, pulled the midnight bell, and brought her lover to his gate, almost to die of joy at the sight of his visitant. And then, for one sweet hour, did they devour

"Each other's questions, answers, eyes,
Nor ever for divine surprise
Could take a proper breath, much less
The supper brought in hastiness
By the glad little gapping page;
While rose, meantime, his mother sage
To wait upon the lady sweet,
And snore discreetly on the seat
In the window of the room,
Whence gleam'd her night-cap through the gloom.
Then parted they to lie awake
For transport, spite of all heartache:
For heaven's in any roof that covers,
Any one same night, two lovers.
They may be divided still;
They may want, in all but will;
But they know that each is there,
Each just parted, each in prayer;
Each more close, because apart,
And every thought clasp'd heart to heart."

The morrow comes, and then, since

"Good must seem good as well as be;
And lest a spot should stain his flower,
For blushing in a brideless bower,
Sir William with the lark must rise,
And bear—but whither bear?—his prize."

To the court they must go, and appeal to the king and queen; and at this very time, happily,

"The bells in many a giddy ring
Run down the wind to meet the king,
Who comes to feast, for service done,
With Earl De Vere at Kensington."

The fair Anne is accordingly placed under the charge of Sir William's aunt, an attendant on the queen; and the majesties of England are soon made aware of the state of things. Of course, the whole now ends happily, as it should do; but we must content ourselves with saying so, and leave our readers to discover for themselves the merry device by which the king caused old Sir Grey, with his sleepy grey-beards, to become a jeer to the court, and Sir Guy to feel shame at his intended barterment of his daughter's hand for gold. After the scene,

"With princely laughter rose the king,
Rose all, the laughter echoing,
Rose the proud wasall, rose the shout
By the trumpets long stretch'd out;
You would have thought that roof and all
Rose in that heart-lifted hall.
On their knees are two alone;
The Palfrey and the barb have gone:
And then arose those two beside,
And the music from its pride
Falls into a beautiful prayer,
Like an angel quitting air;
And the king and his soft queen
Smile upon those two serene,
Whom the priest, accosting bland,
Puts, full willing, hand in hand.
Ah! scarcely even king and queen
Did they then perceive, I woe;
Ner wall to after-memory call
How they went from out that hall."

Of course, our extracts give but an imperfect view of this lively little piece, and we can but recommend our readers to turn to it for themselves. It is a production, as has been said, of no great pretensions, but pleasing and healthy-toned. The author has inscribed it, in some rather quaint lines, to the queen.

A QUEER CASE FOR THE LAW.

IN 1838, M. le Baron de Cormann, an opulent German noble, inhabited the chateau of his ancestors, situated in the environs of Weima. An excellent sportsman, and a redoubted smoker, the baron was at the same time one of the ugliest mortals Germany ever produced. Notwithstanding this circumstance, he was an admirer of beauty in others, and conceived a lively passion for Mademoiselle de Reischberg, daughter of a neighbouring castellane, whose antique domicile constituted nearly his whole property. A formal demand of the lady's hand was made by the baron, and the father, delighted with the prospect of such a match, hastened to give the suitor an assurance of his assent and best wishes. It was not so, however, with the young lady, who, herself endowed with extraordinary charms, could not endure the looks of the baron, and had, besides, long ago given away her heart to one of her cousins, a handsome cavalier, in contrast with whom the baron made a very sorry figure. On this account the assiduities of the latter, and the commands of the father, produced no effect. Mademoiselle de Reischberg conclusively declared that she would never give her hand to any man so thoroughly ugly as the Baron de Cormann.

One evening she was tempted, by new intreaties on the part of the suitor, to repeat the preceding declaration even more energetically than before. The downcast baron afterwards wended his way home. He sat down by his blazing fire, called for a pipe and ale; and, betwixt the curling whiffs from his only source of consolation, he exclaimed passionately—"I would give myself to the Old One himself to be as good-looking as that confounded cousin!" In his energy the baron—who, it will soon be pretty evident, was something of a simpleton—spoke aloud; indeed, he almost roared out the words. After the ejaculation, he smoked on vigorously, every blast-like puff giving indication of the storm within. How long he sat absorbed in this occupation, it is impossible for us to say; but certain it is, that when he laid down the pipe, and the fumes around slowly floated away, he saw before him, to his great surprise, an odd-looking personage, but black all over, in countenance and clothes. "You have been heard," said this personage; "sign this paper, and by to-morrow morning you shall be beautiful in the eyes of all the world, though unchanged in your own."

Stupified—almost out of his senses—M. de Cormann sat staring without motion. "Sign!" repeated the figure; "I am never invoked in vain, and you shall find my words to hold good!" The thought of Mademoiselle de Reischberg crossed the baron's brain. Great was the temptation. He took the pen, and again hesitated, being in a state of unspeakable confusion of mind. Then, as if determined not to trust himself with reflection, he hurriedly signed the paper. The stranger lifted it, bowed, and disappeared.

After this proceeding, which had taken place so rapidly that the baron had had scarcely time for connected thought, he sat in silent dreamy stupor through several long hours. With strange feelings he retired to bed, half afraid of the past, and half eager for the dawn, that he might prove the reality of the promised metamorphosis. Morning broke, and the baron arose. He dressed himself, and perceived no change in his appearance; but he had no sooner descended the staircase than the reality of a change was made manifest. Two servants stood in waiting, and the instant that they cast eyes on their master, they started back in great surprise. "Gracious powers! how much my lord is improved in looks! what a noble figure! how beautiful a countenance!" The baron's heart beat thick with exultation. He went out for further proof, bending his course to the mansion of M. de Reischberg, which was close to his own. Two men met him, and they, also, started to behold him. "How noble is my lord's figure!" cried one. "What a charming countenance!" cried the other; "surely he is much altered!"

These and such like ejaculations confirmed the baron in his impression of the reality of the metamorphosis; and he proceeded, without delay, to the house of M. de Reischberg. Here the crowning stroke was given to his triumph. Mademoiselle de Reischberg appeared equally surprised and enchanted with his form and looks. She seemingly could not conceal or restrain her admiration, and the handsome cousin appeared to be driven out of her thoughts at once by the new and irresistible charms of his rival. Striking while the iron was hot, the baron intreated her to reward his long devotion by consenting to be his. The lady hesitated—the cousin seemed to pass, for a last time, across her thoughts; but the baron pressed his request, and the lady gave her consent.

In passing homewards on that happy day, the baron received additional though superfluous proofs of the change in his looks, from the remarks of various persons who came in his way. When before his own fire, a pipe and ale were again called for to heighten the delightful east of the baron's ruminations. Long he smoked, gazing on the blaze; but

at length he laid down the pipe. Then did he first become sensible of a startling fact. His sable visitor of the preceding evening was again before him. "If you fulfil the intention you now entertain of leading Mademoiselle de Reischberg to the altar," said the stranger solemnly, "you will die on its steps." As he spoke he disappeared.

The Baron de Cormann lay for a long time in a swoon after this fearful announcement. When he regained his senses, and could reflect on what had passed, great was his vexation, and greater his terrors. He could not conceal from himself the fact, that, since his visitor had been able to fulfil one promise so effectually, the same being could not fail to fulfil with equal certainty the menace just made, or at least to foresee the future. He saw that the fiend, if fiend it were, had "paltered with him in a double sense," but the evil was irremediable. Preferring life to every other consideration, the baron, ere long, took a decisive resolution. He wrote to the Reischbergs, announcing his altered resolutions respecting marriage, and, in short, declining the honour of the young lady's hand. On the following morning he jumped into his carriage, and drove off for Paris, after leaving precise orders with an agent to sell his chateau and property at Weima without delay.

It was in the end of 1838 that the Baron de Cormann reached Paris, where he took a handsome hotel in the Rue Dominique. A month or two after his settlement there, he was presented with an acceptance of his own for 120,000 francs, purporting to have been granted by him while in Germany, and a demand was made upon him for payment of the same. The holder of the acceptance, and the requester of payment, was the already-mentioned handsome cousin of Mademoiselle de Reischberg, now become her husband.

The baron was struck dumb by this demand. Never, in the course of his life, was he aware of having signed any such obligation either to the nominal holder of the one before him, or to any person else. Yet he could not deny that the handwriting of the presented bill was his own; it was certainly his signature. Nevertheless, in the consciousness that he really owed no such debt, he refused payment. Immediately afterwards, he went to consult an acute legal friend. After relating the circumstance to that gentleman, and repeating his confident assurance that he never signed, to his knowledge, the obligation in question, though unquestionably his signature was there, the lawyer asked if he never, while in Germany, signed any paper without knowing its contents! The baron thought for an instant, and blushed for his folly. The remembrance of his strange visitant came across his mind with all the attendant circumstances. He compelled himself to tell his legal friend the whole affair.

The acute lawyer saw through the mystery at once. The baron had never been ugly at Weima, he was ugly at Paris, and he had never been aught but ugly anywhere. The handsome cousin had so suborned his domestics as to acquire a knowledge of every movement, even of every word of the baron, in his own establishment; and being near the spot, perhaps in the house, on the evening of the baron's rash ejaculation respecting a change of personal appearance, he had taken advantage of the circumstance, when it was reported to him, to victimise de Cormann in a double and truly diabolical way. By the connivance of the treacherous servants, and one or two other persons, Mademoiselle de Reischberg included, the poor baron had been thoroughly imposed upon, and, in some respects, he was not undeserving of it, seeing that he credulously consented to attempt success in his suit by such means as those described. The conspirator of a cousin, it is probable, imagined that the baron would pay the sum rather than incur the ridicule of a full disclosure.

The affair, says our French authority, came to a trial, and a celebrated Parisian advocate was engaged for the baron, the note for 120,000 francs being lodged, in the interval, in the safe hands of Messrs Rothschild. We regret that we have heard nothing of the issue of the case, and can only hope that the law prevented the poor credulous baron from being ultimately tricked out of his money by the unscrupulous young lady and her cousin. The moral seems to be—never sign any document of whose purport you are not fully acquainted.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE COPYRIGHT ACT.

The "Spectator" describes these as exaggerated. "Because," says he, "Milton got a small sum for his 'Paradise Lost,' and the demand for the work has gone on to increase from age to age, every scribbler whose book proves a failure dreams he can gain by a prolongation of the period of copyright. How many of the thousands of works annually published will be worth the expense of reprinting them a dozen years hence? Making allowance for the less numerous population of the country, the book-press worked as busily about the middle of last century as it does now. Cave's Magazine had a circulation of 30,000; the successive impressions of Richardson's novels were devoured with as much eagerness as those of the Waverley Novels in our days; ephemeral and dead-born publications jostled each other as they fell from the press, just as they do now. How many are now remembered? How many of these would be reprinted if the publishers had to pay a tribute to heirs of their authors for leave to print them? Robertson's histories, Roscoe's 'Lorenzo de Medici,' have been reprinted in cheap forms, and have not, as we are informed,

indemnified the enterprising publishers. Yet the latter was one of the most popular books of its day, and the former are, to a certain extent, still standard works. It is only works of imagination that can by any chance maintain their popularity with successive ages. Every thinker in the department of history or of physical and moral science, if he be worth any thing, opens the way for others to go beyond him. The business of the mass of men is with results: a few curious inquirers may like to look back, and trace the progress by which knowledge has come to be what it is, or a few men of leisure may have a taste for contemplating skilful investigation without reference to what it leads to; but by far the greater number care only for the knowledge they can turn to practical account: they seek for compendiums which contain this knowledge, and leave to the curious few to study and admire the profound thinkers who have contributed to their discovery. And even with regard to works of imagination, those which, like the works of Homer, Shakspeare, and Dante, are felt by all ages, are few—scarcely one in a century; while of the inferior class, worthy of attention, yet not rising much above the average level, each age produces enough to amuse its idle hours, and prefers those who talk about things that interest it in the language with which it is familiar, to those who speak of out-of-date topics in an antiquated style. There is no doubt that the trade of literature is a poor one; but there is just as little doubt that, for the great mass of those who pursue it, an eternal copyright would not in the smallest degree mend the matter. And, on the other hand, it is questionable whether great geniuses need its assistance. Shakspeare turned his talents to account; so did Pope; and as for Sir Walter Scott, about whom such a rout is made, had he husbanded his earnings with the slightest degree of judgment, he would have died a wealthy man. Burns and others only suffered by the law of nature, to which all—the genius and the fool—must alike submit. And as for Wordsworth, if a man sets out by telling the public, 'I will not give you what you like, but what you ought to like,' this is magnanimous, doubtless, but it is somewhat unreasonable to ask at once for the reputation of the austere self-denying sage and the money reward of the courtier."

THE "IMMENSE CONCERN" MANIA.

It is a prevailing insanity among shopkeepers of the present day to be at the head of an immense concern, and it is a malady which, in almost every case, finishes with a fatal result, not only to the individual who is the immediate object of the complaint, but to those who may happen to be bitten in the interim. It generally seizes the proprietors of linen-draper's shops, and, like the bite of the tarantula, sets them cutting the most extraordinary capers, in the course of which they start off with a most lively gallop, and conclude with a pas, not of the most graceful kind, in the Court of Bankruptcy. An immense concern generally begins in a single house, and the disease first develops itself into a strong itching to take the next door, which, when once accomplished, is soon followed by an eccentric resolution to add the words "and Co." to the name of the proprietor. The next stage is an eruption of large placards conveying incoherent hints about "giving away," "selling under prime cost," and other unaccountable acts of generosity which the patient professes to practice; while, by degrees, he grows bolder in the tone of his tickets, and sundry commodities are placed under the public eye, inscribed with mysterious allusions to "an alarming sacrifice." The breaking out upon the goods shortly flies to the windows themselves, which are soon covered with enormous posting bills, in which the words "Extensive Failure" are extremely conspicuous; and there is a desperate effort to arrest attention by thrusting goods almost into the street, with a printed invitation to the public to "Look at this," and a most uncalculated allusion to the "distress of the Spitalfields weavers." The disease now becomes convulsive; enormous piles of druggery are deposited outside the shop, in bold defiance of the Paving Act; carpets dangle from the upper storeys; blankets float in the air, and pieces of calico flutter in the breeze; while straw bonnets are dashed recklessly into the window, with an intimation that there is a choice of 25,000 all at a price not even worth mentioning. Blocks are dressed up in cloaks to look like customers; dresses that have been lying in the warehouse since last year are labelled as "quite new, and just imported." Every thing is marked at an astounding moderate price; but, by some strange accident, there is not a ticket but what has slipped from one thing to another if any one wants to purchase the labelled article. After these very active symptoms, the disease comes to a termination; the immense concern dies a natural death, and the proprietor amuses the public by a series of candid confessions to the commissioner of bankruptcy, or gratifies a spirit of enterprise by "bolting" to America.—Glasgow paper.

PUBLIC HEALTH IN A TIME OF PRIVATION.

The following paragraph appeared early in June in the Glasgow Courier. If right in facts and inferences, it affords most important matter of reflection:—"It gives us much pleasure to learn that, notwithstanding the want of employment by the working-classes, and the almost unparalleled amount of destitution which has consequently prevailed for some time past amongst a certain portion of the community, the state of the public health was hardly ever in a more satisfactory condition than at present, since the city contained anything like the same extent of population. Such a state of things must be peculiarly gratifying, particularly when it is considered that we have all along been led to believe that the periodical destitution of a portion of the poorer classes was the principal cause which gave rise to typhus fever, &c., which, spreading from one class to another, not unfrequently became a general scourge. Strong evidence, however, is at present afforded that neither typhus fever nor any other contagious disease is necessarily a concomitant of great poverty amongst a portion of the community; and while we acknowledge the goodness of providence in thus alleviating and making less intolerable the ills

which flesh is heir to,' we think we can discover in surrounding circumstances the causes which have been in operation in producing the present very gratifying state of the public health. April, May, and June, up to this date, have been remarkable for the small number of patients either treated by the district surgeons or sent to the Royal Infirmary. Something of this may be attributed to the excellent weather which the country has enjoyed during that period; but we feel quite confident that it has been far more the result of the poor being supplied with a regular, though limited, amount of victuals from the soup kitchen and otherwise, and to the necessity which compelled many of them to abstain from the inordinate use of ardent spirits, than to any other cause whatever. When prosperity returns, therefore, and the working-classes generally are again placed in a condition to support themselves, we trust that the present experience will not be thrown away, and that more money will be spent by them on good wholesome food, and less on what causes so much misery, disease, and death."

PROTECTION OF LAND FROM STORMS.

[From the *Gardener's Chronicle*.]

Few things are of greater importance to those who live in bleak situations, or on the coast, than to know in what way they may best break the force of the prevailing winds. Belts of wood are generally resorted to, and when they can be formed, they are the best kind of defence; but the difficulty is to obtain them. Many persons are to be found in these islands who, after incurring considerable expense in the attempt, have been obliged to abandon it as hopeless. In Mr Stephens's "Book of the Farm," of which we have on former occasions spoken as a most valuable work, full of interesting practical information, is an account of a method of protecting bleak situations effectually, which will certainly be interesting, and probably will be new to our readers; and which, by permission of the proprietors of that work, we have been able to introduce into our pages. The excellent remarks of the author render any addition on our part superfluous:—

"That a fence affords shelter," says Mr Stephens, "must be a fact cognisant to every one. Feel the warmth of a walled garden—the calm felt under the walls of even a ruin compared to the howling blast around—observe the forward grass, in early spring, on the south side of a hedge compared to that on its other side—and listen to the subdued tone of the wind under a shed to its boisterous noise heard in the open air. Sensibly felt as all these instances of shelter are, they are but isolated cases. In more extended spheres, cottages stand in a calm in the midst of a forest, come the wind from whatever quarter it may. Farm-steadings lie snug under the lee side of a hill. Whole farms are unaffected by wind when embayed amidst encircling hills; and be the shelter, therefore, great or small, the advantages derived from it are sensibly felt. As one instance of the benefits of shelter afforded by even a low wall to a park, from the cutting effects of the sea air, I give a sketch to show you its effects better than words can convey. The wall and the wood next it are of the same height, but a few yards only inwards; the wood rises to a considerable height, and this is effected by a very simple contrivance; namely, the peculiar form of the cope of the wall. It is raised like an isosceles triangle, by which the wind, when it beats against its side, is reflected upwards into the air at the same angle. Had the cope been flat, the blast would have cut off the tops of the trees in a horizontal direction. But without the wood such a form of coping would afford similar shelter. Suppose land exposed on the top of a high coast, where the wind generally sweeps along the surface of the ground, injuring every plant it blows against by a momentum acquired in passing over miles of ocean—were a wall built on the top of the crag, at such a distance from its brow, and of such a height, and with such an angle to its cope, as would deflect the wind upwards, it would cause the wind to have lost most of its momentum before it again reached the ground. Such a wall, or such a belt of wood, or such a plantation without a wall, if projected on a large scale, and planted near the top of a sloping precipice, or other rising ground, would shelter a large extent of country against the prevailing winds. Were such barriers placed in lines, in suitable places, across the country, not only its local but its general climate would be greatly ameliorated.

Instances are not wanting to show the usefulness of such barriers. Even within the experience of the present generation, shelter has been found to amend the climate and increase the crops of particular parts of the country. As instances of wall shelter, the garden of the Earl of Lauderdale at Dunbar, and the plantations, along the sea-side, of the Earl of Wemyss at Gosford, both in East Lothian, afford good examples. In the latter instance a coped wall has afforded so perfect a shelter to the plantations, that, at the distance of from twenty to thirty yards, the forest trees are scarcely affected by the sea-breeze, on ground which formerly produced nothing of higher growth than sweet-brier and whins. The garden of Mr Traill of Woodwick, at Kirkwall, Orkney, affords another remarkable instance of the benefits of wall-shelter. But the benefits derived from plantations are far more extensive and important, not only in affording shelter, but in improving poor land. 'Previous to the division of the common moor of Methven (in Perthshire) in 1793,' says Mr Thomas Bishop, 'the venerable Lord Lynedoch and Lord Methven had each secured their lower slopes of land adjoining the moor with belts of plantation. The year following I entered Lord Methven's service, and in 1798 planted about sixty acres of the higher moor ground, valued at two shillings per acre, for shelter to eighty or ninety acres set apart for cultivation, and let in three divisions to six individuals. The progress made in improving the land was very slow for the first fifteen years, but thereafter went on rapidly, being aided by the shelter derived from the growth of the plantations; and the whole has now become fair land, bearing annually crops of oats, barley, peas, potatoes, and turnips; and in spring, 1836, exactly forty years from the time of putting down the said plantation, I sold four acres of larch and

fir (average growth) standing therein for L.220, which, with the value of reserved trees, and average amount per acre of thinnings sold previously, gave a return of L.67 per acre.' In some situations trees will afford better shelter than stone walls, the latter being most available near the sea side in warding off the blighting effects of the sea breeze. On the summit of Shotley Fell, sixteen miles west of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Mr Burnet, of Shotley Bridge, enclosed 400 acres of moorland with high stone walls, and he cropped the ground in an easy manner for the soil. The land was thus kept in good heart; but the soil being very poor, stock advanced but little, and consequently the land would not have let for above sixpence an acre even under the best management, and after all that had been done for it; but the centre part of each field was then put within a plantation, and the improvement which followed was surprising."

RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION.

We copy the following from a New York newspaper:—"Three thousand wild pigeons, from Michigan, arrived in this city, on the 25th instant, alive, over the Western Railroad. One thousand five hundred bushels of wheat were last week bought in New York city, carried up the North River to Greenbush, and thence sent to Sutton, near Worcester, over the Western Railroad.

We understand that the Western Railroad are about preparing refrigeratory cars, in which fresh beef, pork, veal, poultry, pigeons, venison, wild game, and other fresh meat can, by a moderate quantity of ice, be kept in order in the heat of summer, and in which (in winter) they can be kept from freezing; thereby, in either case, adding much to the value of the article when carried to market.

These refrigeratory cars will be used, for the like advantageous purpose, to carry eggs, butter, lard, fish, vegetables, cheese, lemons, oranges, strawberries, and all berries, and fruits, and roots—being a mode of transportation of great value for nice delicacies which bear a good price. We also learn that it is contemplated these refrigeratory cars shall go with the passenger trains in twelve hours, through from Albany to Boston, and shall be placed between the tender and passenger cars, giving additional security to the passengers in case of accident. If our Michigan and Ohio friends will put in refrigeratory cars the fresh meat and the wild game they intend for this market, they can send their cars to Buffalo on the lakes; and from Buffalo to Greenbush, partly by railroad and partly by canal, or wholly by the Erie Canal. Then from Greenbush, it can come to Boston quickly and in perfect order, the moment the system now proposed is perfected. In like way, a chowder of fresh Massachusetts cod-fish will be obtained at Chicago.

It may be asked, 'What is a refrigeratory car?' It is simply a common car, with a hole at the bottom, which you stop by a sponge, that sponge allowing the water to drop down, while it impedes the air coming up into the car. Then you have four inches of powdered charcoal on the sides, and top, and bottom of the car, compactly between the two boards, which form each of the sides, as well as the top and the bottom. In fact, it is only necessary to imitate the refrigerator, which is used in Boston, in families, and is sold by Kittidge and Blake. If it is said that it will be difficult to make so large a refrigerator as an eight-wheel car will be, we need only reply, that the ice-houses at Fresh Pond are, in fact, large refrigerators, and that some of them are large enough to contain 5000 tons of ice, and have kept ice from melting for a whole year, and longer too.

In sending a cargo of ice to Calcutta, we so arrange the hold of the ship as to make it virtually a large refrigerator; and we do this so efficiently, that, crossing the equator twice on her passage, and being for a long time in the warm water and under the burning sun between the tropics, she yet loses very little of her cargo. Barrels of apples, kept cool in this refrigerator, arrive at Calcutta from Boston in the most perfect order, and command a great price."

[This is all remarkably enterprising, and very wonderful; but one standing at this cool distance may be permitted to ask, Whether the thing is to be done with real or borrowed capital? The imprudence of our transatlantic brethren in plunging into all sorts of schemes of improvement, without first working for the money to carry them into execution, is causing them to be laughed at throughout Europe.]

CUNNING OF A LUNATIC.

A very laughable incident occurred at the lunatic asylum at Lancaster some years ago. A parish officer from the neighbourhood of Middleton took a lunatic to the asylum, pursuant to an order signed by two magistrates. As the man was respectably connected, a gig was hired for the purpose, and he was persuaded that it was merely an excursion of pleasure on which he was going. In the course of the journey, however, something occurred to arouse the suspicions of the lunatic with respect to his real destination; but he said nothing on the subject, made no resistance, and seemed to enjoy his jaunt. When they arrived at Lancaster, it was too late in the evening to proceed to the asylum, and they took up their quarters for the night at an inn. Very early in the morning the lunatic got up, and searched the pockets of the officer, where he found the magistrate's order for his own detention, which of course let him completely into the secret. With that cunning which madmen not unfrequently display, he made the best of his way to the asylum, saw one of the keepers, and told him that he had got a sad mad fellow down at Lancaster, whom he should bring up in the course of the day, adding, "He's a very queer fellow, and has got very odd ways. For instance, I should not wonder if he was to say I was the madman, and that he was bringing me; but you must take care of him, and not believe a word he says." The keeper of course promised compliance, and the lunatic walked back to the inn, where he found the overseer still fast asleep. He awoke him, and they sat down to breakfast together. "You're a very lazy fellow to be lying in bed all day. I have had a good long walk this morning."

"Indeed," said the overseer; "I should like to have a walk myself after breakfast; perhaps you will go with me." The lunatic assented; and after breakfast they set out, the overseer leading the way towards the asylum, intending to deliver his charge; but it never occurred to him to examine whether his order was safe. When they got within sight of the asylum, the lunatic exclaimed, "What a fine house this is!" "Yes," said the overseer; "I should like to see the inside of it." "So should I," observed the lunatic. "Well," said the other, "I daresay that they will let us look through; however, I'll ask." They went to the door; the overseer rang the bell, and the keeper, whom the lunatic had previously seen, made his appearance with two or three assistants. The overseer then began to fumble in his pockets for the order, when the lunatic produced it and gave it to the keeper, saying, "This is the man I spoke to you about; you will take care of him, shave his head, and put a strait waistcoat upon him." The men immediately laid hands upon the poor overseer, who vociferated loudly that the other was the madman and he the keeper; but as this only seemed to confirm the story previously told by the lunatic, it did not at all tend to procure his liberation. He was taken away, and became so very obstreperous, that a strait waistcoat was speedily put upon him, and his head was shaved *secundum artem*. Meanwhile the lunatic walked deliberately back to the inn, paid the reckoning, and set out on his journey homeward. The good people were of course not a little surprised on finding the wrong man return: they were afraid that the lunatic in a fit of frenzy had murdered the overseer; and they asked him with great trepidation what he had done with —? "Done with him," said the madman; "why, I left him at Lancaster Asylum raving mad;" which, indeed, was not very far from truth, for the wits of the poor overseer were well nigh overset by his unexpected detention and subsequent treatment. Farther inquiry was forthwith made, and it was ascertained that the man was actually in the asylum. A magistrate's order was procured for his liberation, and he returned home with a handkerchief tied round his head, in lieu of the covering which nature had bestowed upon it.—*Flowers of Anecdote*.

THE WEALTH OF ENGLAND.

It is a common error in this country (America) to imagine that the riches of England are derived from and dependent upon her commerce; and the influence of this great mistake is shown in the many wild suppositions that have been hazarded, touching the effects of our commercial and financial difficulties upon the financial and political condition of the wonderful little island. The truth is, that the merchants of England, with all their great capital and vast extent of operations, hold but a very small portion of the riches existing in that country; and this can be made apparent by a few simple considerations. Look at the squirearchy, for instance; the thousands and thousands of country gentlemen, with their comfortable incomes of three, or five, or ten thousand pounds per annum, derived exclusively from the soil, and the enormous fortunes of the nobility.

Estimate, if it can be estimated, the immense amount of treasure in the country, existing in the form of plate and jewels. Why, at a single dinner given in London, on the 18th June, gold and silver plate to the amount of a million and a half of dollars was exhibited at once, all the property of one individual—the Duke of Wellington. This celebrated personage could have relieved from all their difficulties all three of the great American houses which have been compelled to stop, simply by turning over to them his dishes and tureens, vases, and candelabra, without diminishing his income one farthing; and there are fifty ladies in London, any one of whom could have put Messrs Brown & Co. in ample funds for all emergencies, merely by making them a present of her diamonds.

Without taking the crown jewels into the account, it is no doubt susceptible of proof, that in London alone there are gold and silver plate and jewels to the amount of two hundred millions of dollars, and it must be remembered that mighty as London is, the wealth of the kingdom in wrought gold and silver is very far from being centred there. An immense quantity of it is scattered among the castles and country seats of the nobility, such as Alnwick Castle, Blenheim, Chatsworth, Belvoir, Woburn Abbey, Bowood, and a hundred others which we could name, and among the lovely mansions of the country gentlemen, with which the whole surface is dotted by thousands. Think of the libraries and galleries, the immense and almost priceless collections of pictures and statues, and costly works of art, in which no country in the world is richer. Why, the whole mercantile wealth of England is but an item of comparatively trifling magnitude. The non-payment of debt, if it were not paid, which, thank Heaven, it soon will be, so far from inflicting a mortal blow upon the prosperity of the kingdom, would never be felt or thought of, except as a handy theme for a sarcasm, now and then directed against republican honesty and honour. The fortune of the Duke of Bedford, or Northumberland, or Devonshire, would clear the whole of it, and nobody but his grace be a farthing the poorer.—*From a New York Paper*.

SELF-ESTEEM PIQUED.

Success seems to be that which forms the distinction between confidence and conceit. Nelson, when young, was piqued at not being noticed in a certain paragraph of the newspapers which detailed an action wherein he had assisted. "But never mind," said he, "I will one day have a gazette of my own."—*Lacoe*.

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